

PATRICE TOMCIK: Hello. My name is Patrice Tomcik, and I live in Gibsonia, PA, about 30 minutes north of Pittsburgh. I'm here as a mother of two young boys, member of grass roots organization Mars Care Group, a member of Protect Our Children Coalition, and a member of Mom's Clean Air Force. What all these organizations have in common is that we fight for our children's health. I'm here today because I know that every stage of the coal life cycle impacts human health and the pollution from the mining and burning of coal in power plants has an even greater impact on children because they are vulnerable population. Developing babies and children are vulnerable because they have body systems that are not mature and are still developing. The lungs and brains continue to develop until the early 20s and exposure to harmful pollution can cause damage to these organ systems. As a parent, I'm concerned about the harmful pollution created from the burning of coal and power plants in my community. I live downwind from one of the largest coal plants. I'm particularly concerned about what my children are breathing in. The pollutants that are emitted are particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and dangerous heavy metals such as mercury, lead and there are many more. This pollution can effect our children's health by causing ground level ozone response, which affects lung tissue, cause respiratory diseases, adversely affect the normal lung development of children and exacerbate asthma attacks. Asthma is a leading cause of missed school days among children ages 5 to 17. Exposure to mercury is a particular concern for pregnant women and nursing mothers and young children because mercury is a toxic heavy metal that can cause brain damage, impairs learning and growth. Even people who do not develop illness directly from whole foods find their health impacted due to coal's contribution to carbon dioxide and causing climate change. The health risk from climate change are especially serious for children, elderly those who are immune compromised. The direct effects of climate change include increased illness and deaths from extreme weather and heat stress. Children are especially vulnerable to heat exposure because they don't have fully developed temperature regulation mechanisms within their bodies. The indirect effects of climate change are malnutrition, food insecurity, anxiety, depression and increase of insect-borne diseases like the zika virus. The BLM must consider the climate consequences and health impacts on our children and future generations of leasing public lands for fossil fuel extraction. We need to start developing the capacity today to generate energy from clean, safe and renewable sources

for the health of our children today and future generations.
Thank you.